

## Message Text

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51

ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EA-06 SR-02 ORM-01 AID-05 FDRE-00

VO-03 SCA-01 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 INSE-00 /084 W

----- 079474

P 091400Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4794

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMEG, SREF

SUBJECT: RF

SETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF STATE 97854 AND 107169

WE HAVE DELAYED RESPONSE TO REFTELS PENDING OPPORTUNITY  
TO TALK ABOUT REFUGEE PROBLEM WITH LOCAL UNHCR OFFICIALS.  
THIS HAS NOW BEEN DONE, AND THEY HAVE CONFIRMED OUR INITIAL  
REACTION THAT IT WOULD BE DISSERVICE TO REFUGEES TO SETTLE ANY  
OF THEM IN BURUNDI.

EVEN WITH RWANDAN TUTSI REFUGEES, WHO AFTER ALL  
COME FROM SAME ETHNIC AND CULTURAL ROOTS AS REGIME HERE, BURUNDI  
RECORD IS QUITE POOR. PEASANTS AMONG THEM USUALLY FIND NO FIELDS  
TO FARM AND MUST BE MAINTAINED IN UNHCR CAMP TYPE AREAS, WHILE  
URBAN OR SOMEWHAT EDUCATED RWANDANS FIND THEMSELVES IN BITTER  
COMPETITION WITH URBAN BURUNDIANS FOR JOBS, HOUSING AND SCHOOLING  
FEW RWANDANS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO ACQUIRE BURUNDI CITIZENSHIP,  
AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE HOSTILITY TO THEM AMONG LOCAL POPULATION.  
ALTHOUGH MANY VIETNAMESE REFUGEES PRESUMABLY SPEAK FRENCH,  
THEY WOULD REPRESENT A THOROUGHLY ALIEN INTRUSION WHICH  
BURUNDI WOULD FIND WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSIMILATE. WE DO NOT  
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SUPPOSE THAT THERE ARE MANY FARMERS AMONG REFUGEES, BUT

THEY WOULD FIND AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES HERE  
TOTALLY DIFFERENT, EVEN IF UNHCR MANAGED SOMEHOW TO BUY THEM LAND.  
AS FOR SKILLED AND EDUCATED VIETNAMESE, PLACING THEM IN JOBS  
WOULD BE SEEN BY GOVERNMENT HERE AS DEPRIVING SOME ASPIRING  
BURUNDIAN OF SCARCE POSITION. AND, AS WITH ATTITUDE TOWARD  
RWANDANS, MOST BURUNDIANS WOULD BE ANGRY TO SEE MONEY SPENT ON  
CREATING  
RELATIVELY PRIVILEGED STATUS AND SPECIAL AMENITIES FOR  
NEWCOMERS, WHICH ALMOST UNIVERSALLY POVERTY-STRICKEN  
BURUNDIANS CANNOT ACQUIRE FOR THEMSELVES.

THESE CONSIDERATIONS ARE OF COURSE QUITE APART FROM FACT  
THAT REGIME HAS FOR YEARS SUPPORTED VIET CONG AND PRG. IF WE  
WERE TO APPROACH FONMIN ON REFUGEES, HIS REACTION WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY

BE THAT THEY SHOULD GO BACK TO VIETNAM TO ENJOY MAGNANIMITY AND  
BLESSING OF PRG ADMINISTRATION. NATURALLY, I WILL PRESENT THE  
BEST POSSIBLE CASE IF DEPARTMENT SO INSTRUCTS, BUT MY STRONG  
FEELING AT PRESENT IS THAT IT WOULD BE WISEST NOT RPT NOT TO TRY.  
MARK

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, INSTRUCTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
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**TAGS:** SREF, AEMR, BY, VS  
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